

## **Attachment 4.11(a) – Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs**

Over the past year DVR and the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) have worked collaboratively with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA) to formulate methods to conduct a comprehensive DVR agency and customer rehabilitation needs assessment. RDA has conducted several surveys and is currently in the process of finalizing a full report from the process. In collaboration with DVR and the WSRC, RDA developed surveys directed to employers, DVR staff, and DVR customers.

### Employer Survey

More than 2,000 employers completed either a hard-copy survey mailed to their business or an online survey.

Three different employer groups were targeted:

1. Employers that had hired DVR customers in the past 14 months
2. Employers from a Department of Labor and Industries data base in sectors that DVR is targeting for potential development (technology/business/science, education, health and social services and government)
3. Employers that are members of the Association of Washington Businesses

### DVR Employee Survey

All DVR employees received a web link survey asking about DVR needs and priorities with a response rate of approximately 55%.

### DVR Customers

RDA contacted 111 DVR customers by telephone to conduct a survey regarding their satisfaction with services and perceived needs.

### Findings

The findings from this comprehensive assessment are being reviewed by agency leadership and will be considered in the development of DVR's stated goals and priorities. Predominant themes from the findings of the overall assessment appear to be consistent and point to the following needs:

- Customers need to be served more quickly and efficiently
- Improved relationships between DVR and employers
- More resources for effective job development and placement activities, both internal and external
- Greater access to higher paying jobs with benefits for customers.

## **Supported Employment**

### **INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

As part of DVR's 2006-2009 comprehensive needs assessment, focus groups were conducted in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council. That activity provided DVR with feedback from individuals with mental illness, both individuals receiving services from DVR and individuals who were not. Feedback generally conveyed that individuals with mental illness need ongoing supports to maintain employment.

DVR is aware, through ongoing communication with the State's Mental Health Division, that there continues to be a growing need, for ongoing supports for employment maintenance of customers with mental health disabilities. This has been evident particularly over the past year as resources for mental health services have decreased. The Mental Health Transformation Grant, with the DVR Director as a member, has created a platform to address this service gap. Today, many steps are being taken to establish employment as an expectation and to create a funding structure that will make supported employment available on a more consistent basis.

### **INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

As a continuance of DVR's 2006-2009 comprehensive needs assessment, the State Rehabilitation Council conducted focus groups with individuals with developmental disabilities. Results of these groups provided DVR with feedback about what individuals with developmental disabilities want from DVR and what they need to achieve employment. Based on that information, DVR has taken steps to share what we learned with DDD, county DD agencies, and DVR field leadership and agree upon steps for improving collaboration.

### **HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION**

Ongoing communication with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) throughout the past FFY has emphasized the need for better coordination between DVR and local high schools to jointly serve customer with Individualized Education Plans and 504 students. These students are not all receiving consistent access to information and services from DVR to assist in their progress toward graduation and transition to adulthood and employment. In FFY 2009 DVR has started a project in collaboration with OSPI to collect information to identify and understand the needs of 504 students statewide and to develop a more consistent and effective way of working collaboratively with schools to serve these customers.

### **COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS**

DVR is currently reviewing community rehabilitation program outcome data to assess the quality and effectiveness of services. Throughout 2010, DVR will be engaging community rehabilitation programs to identify needs and to develop strategies for improvement. DVR will also use this input to renegotiate its contract with community rehabilitation programs in FFY 2010 to ensure the contract supports high quality services and outcomes.